The Neo-Akan

writing system based on Adinkra, Abrammo, Afaka symbols...

7 glyphs

kɔradin nkyerɛwee

16 glyphs

created by Ntirikwaamaa (anonymous)
started in 2021, completed in 2026

Thanks to the ancestors,
Émilie Aurat and Agyei Archer

Introduction — The Merankron movement and the Need for an Indigenous Script

Merankron is a Neo-Akan cultural and creative movement dedicated to the restoration, unification, and creative expression of Akan identity. Its work spans language revival, visual culture, and knowledge production, operating under the principle that a people's language and writing system are inseparable from their sovereignty.

The Neo-Akan Movement recognises that the Akan peoples spread across Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and the African diaspora share a common linguistic and cultural inheritance that has been fragmented by centuries of colonisation, the transatlantic slave trade, and forced migration. Each of these forces imposed foreign orthographic systems, introduced competing Romanisation schemes, and severed communities from a shared written standard. The result is a single cultural identity rendered illegible to itself across national and linguistic borders.

Nowhere is this more visible than in personal names. Consider the Akan day-name for a male born on Wednesday a name that carries spiritual significance, encodes lineage, and has been carried by Akan people across continents for generations. Depending on where that person was born, enslaved, baptised, or registered, the same name may appear as:

kwaku · kweku · kouakou · kaku · kakou · koikou· quack · quarcoo · quacoe

These are not different names. They are the same name, distorted by English, French, Portuguese, and Dutch phonology and spelling conventions, by the ears of slave traders and colonial administrators, and by the imprecision of Latin letters applied to sounds they were never designed to represent. A writing system rooted in the language itself not in a colonial alphabet makes this kind of fragmentation impossible.

The need for an indigenous script is therefore not merely aesthetic or academic. It is a practical act of cultural self-determination. A unified orthography allows the Akan diaspora to correspond, to name, to record, and to teach across the boundaries that colonialism drew in a script that belongs to the language and not to the language's oppressors.

Kɔradin was created in 2026 by Ntirikwaamaa as the writing system of the Merankron project. It was designed with Akan languages primarily Twi and Fante as its primary target, but its structure is adaptable. Other language communities facing the same problem of colonial orthographic fragmentation are encouraged to adopt, adapt, or take inspiration from Kɔradin to develop writing systems of their own or to reject the Latin alphabet altogether in favour of indigenous graphic traditions.

Part I — The Writing System

Script Type — Syllabary

Kɔradin is a syllabary: each glyph represents a complete syllable rather than a single phoneme. This is well-suited to Akan, which has a strongly CV (consonant + vowel) syllable structure. Rather than spelling out individual sounds with sequences of Latin letters each letter carrying the ambiguity of a foreign phonological tradition a syllabary assigns one unambiguous shape to each syllable.

The syllables of Kɔradin are named exactly as they are pronounced. There are no letter names separate from sound values: the glyph for ka is called ka, the glyph for bi is called bi, and so on. This makes the system learnable without intermediary naming conventions.

The script is read and written left to right.

Radicals, Diacritics, and Nasal Marks

Radicals

The foundational unit of Kɔradin is the radical: a base consonant shape from which seven syllable glyphs are derived — one for each vowel in the Akan system (A, E, Ɛ, I, O, Ɔ, U). Each derived glyph represents a complete CV syllable.

A radical is therefore not a letter but a family head. The seven members of the family share a recognisable visual stem, modified systematically by the vowel. A reader who knows the radical can identify any of its vowel forms even before memorising each one individually.

The vowel-only row marked with a dash (—) in the chart — uses the same seven-vowel grid but has no consonant onset. These glyphs represent standalone vowel syllables: the a of Akan, the ɔ of ɔkra, and so on.

The vowel-only radical row (-) and the P radical row.

Variant Glyphs and Diacritics

Beyond the nine core radicals, the Kɔradin chart provides variant glyphs for additional consonants. Some variants are visually distinct shapes (H, B, G, L, V, Z); others are formed by adding a diacritic to a base radical:

- *Palatalisation diacritic: added to K, T, H, and D to produce the KY/CH, TW, HY, and GY/J variant forms.*
- *Labialisation diacritic: added to produce the KW, TW, DW, HW forms.*
- *Labiovelar diacritic (shown in red in the legend): placed after the P or B glyph to produce KP and GB respectively. These are used in Akan languages, Ga, and Ewe where the labiovelar stops are phonemic.*

The variant legend at the bottom of the Kɔradin chart illustrates this clearly: the base form TO, the palatalised KYO, the labialised TWO, and then the diacritic forms KPA and GBA.

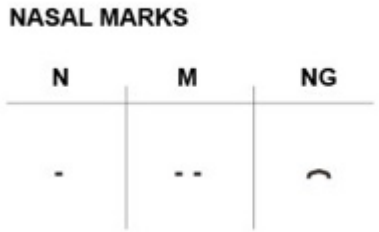
Variant legend — TO · KYO · TWO · PA · KPA · GBA

2.3 Nasal Marks

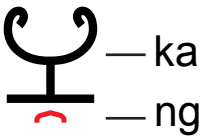
When a syllable is followed by a nasal coda (n, m, or ng), a small diacritic mark is placed underneath the preceding syllable glyph. The nasal does not receive its own glyph it is attached visually to the nucleus it closes.

There are three nasal marks:

Nasal	Mark	Description
N (alveolar)	-	Single dot beneath the glyph
M (bilabial)	··	Double dots beneath the glyph
NG (velar)		Small arc / breve beneath the glyph



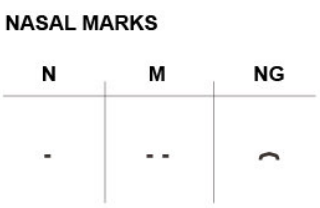
Example: in kan (to count), the nasal mark is placed beneath the ka glyph. The syllable glyph “ka” and its nasal mark together read as kang

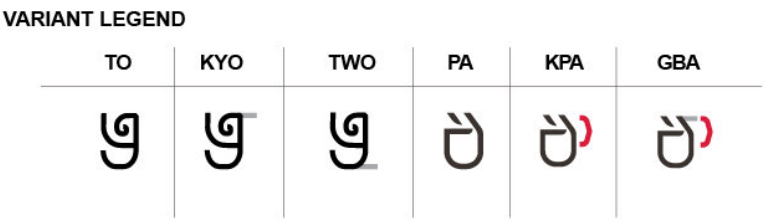


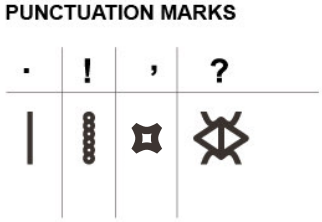
Nasal marks from the Kɔradin chart: N · M · NG

3. Glyph Inventory by Radical Group

The following sections present the complete glyph inventory ordered by radical family.







Vowel-Only (—) and H

The vowel-only row produces the seven standalone vowel glyphs: a, e, ɛ, i, o, ɔ, u. These are used wherever a syllable begins with a vowel and has no consonant onset — for example the initial syllable of akan, ɔkɔra, or etire.

- *H — the glottal fricative, listed as a variant of the vowel-only row.*

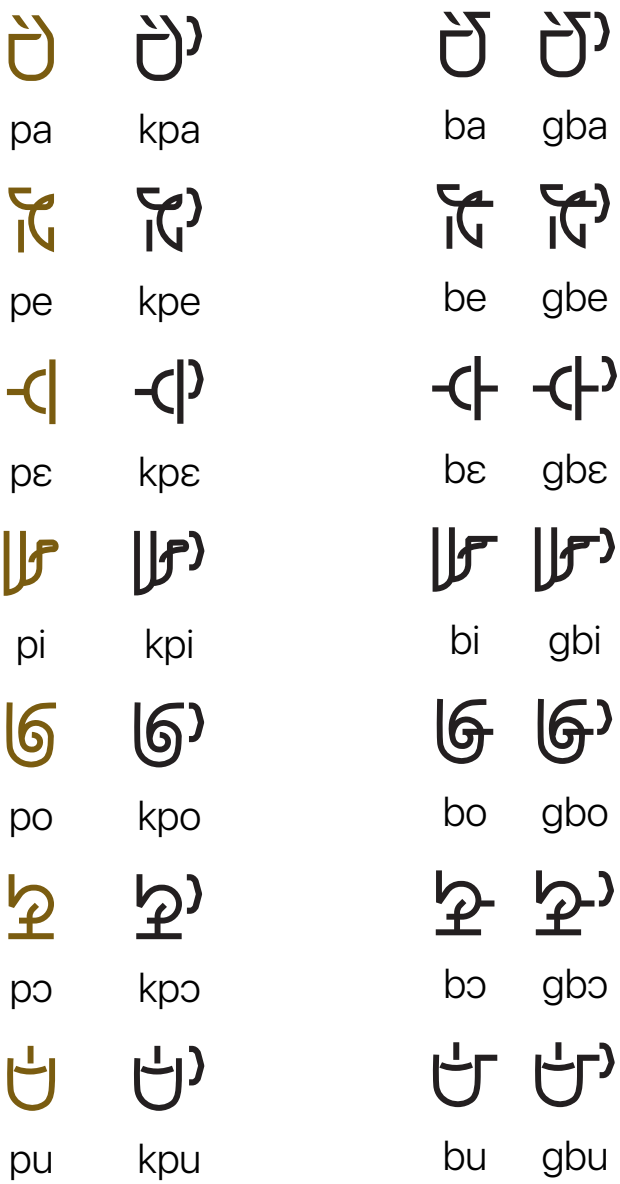
W— and Y— (Combined Variants)

The glides W and Y have their own rows in the combined variants section of the chart. Their syllables — wa, we, wɛ, wi, wo, wɔ, wu and ya, ye, yɛ, yi, yo, yɔ, yu — cover all seven vowels.

P—, KP—, B—, GB— (Bilabial Group)

The bilabial radical P produces the voiceless bilabial stop syllables pa, pe, pɛ, pi, po, pɔ, pu. Its voiced counterpart B is listed as a variant and produces ba, be, bɛ, bi, bo, bɔ, bu.

- *KP*
- *GB*

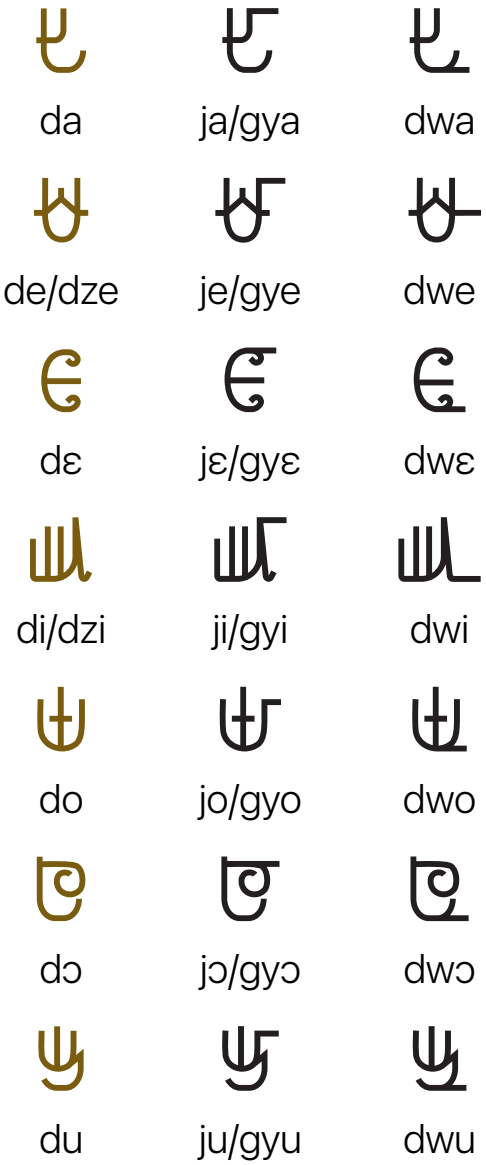


D—, GY—/J—, DW— (Voiced Alveolar Group)

The D radical produces da, de, dɛ, di, do, dɔ, du.

- *GY / J*

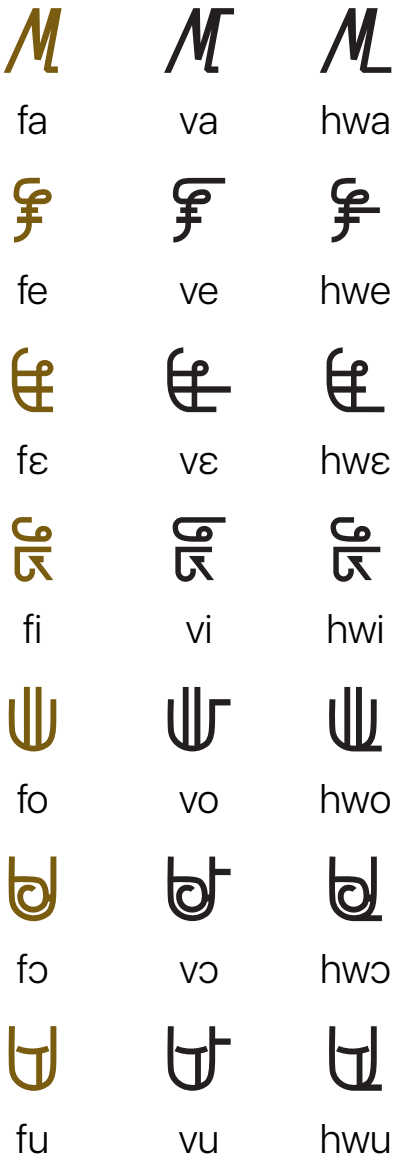
- *DW*



F—, V—, HW— (Fricative Group)

The F radical produces the labiodental fricative syllables fa, fe, fɛ, fi, fo, fɔ, fu

- *V*
- *HW*

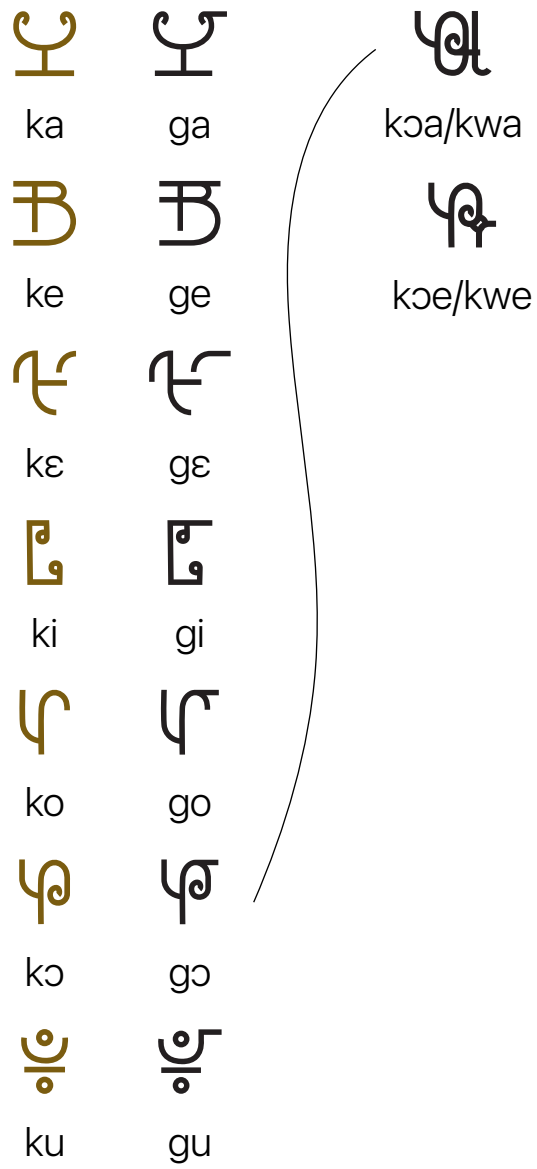


K—, G—, KWA, KWE (Velar Group)

The K radical produces the voiceless velar stop syllables ka, ke, kɛ, ki, ko, kɔ, ku. Its voiced counterpart G is a variant producing ga, ge, gɛ, gi, go, gɔ, gu.

- *KW*

Note that KWE and KWƐ share one glyph in the current chart, distinguishable by context and ATR harmony.



R— and L— (Rhotic and Lateral)

The R radical produces the alveolar tap/trill syllables ra, re, rɛ, ri, ro, rɔ, ru.

- *L*

ra la

re le

rɛ lɛ

ri li

ro lo

rɔ lɔ

ru lu

T—, KY—/CH—, TW— (Voiceless Alveolar Group)

The T radical produces ta, te, tɛ, ti, to, tɔ, tu.

- *KY / CH*
- *TW*

N—, NY—, M—, MY— (Nasal Onset Group)

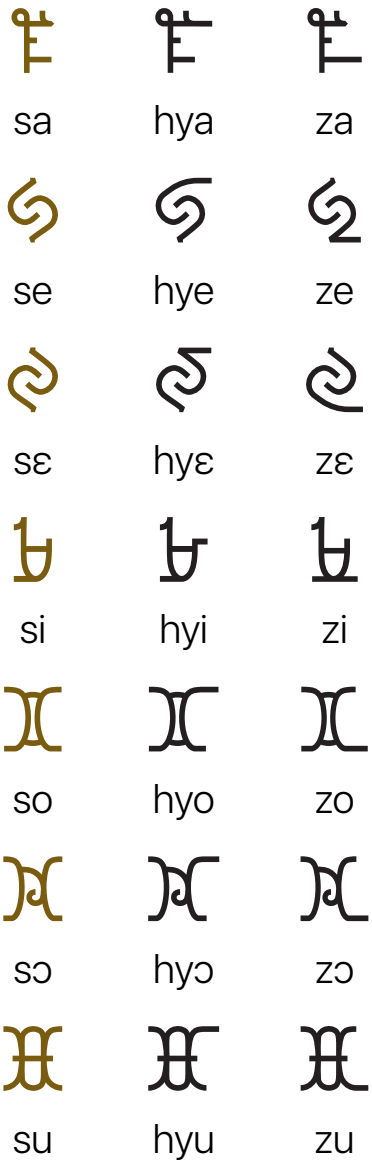
The N radical produces syllables where the nasal is the onset (not a coda): na, ne, nɛ, ni, no, nɔ, nu.

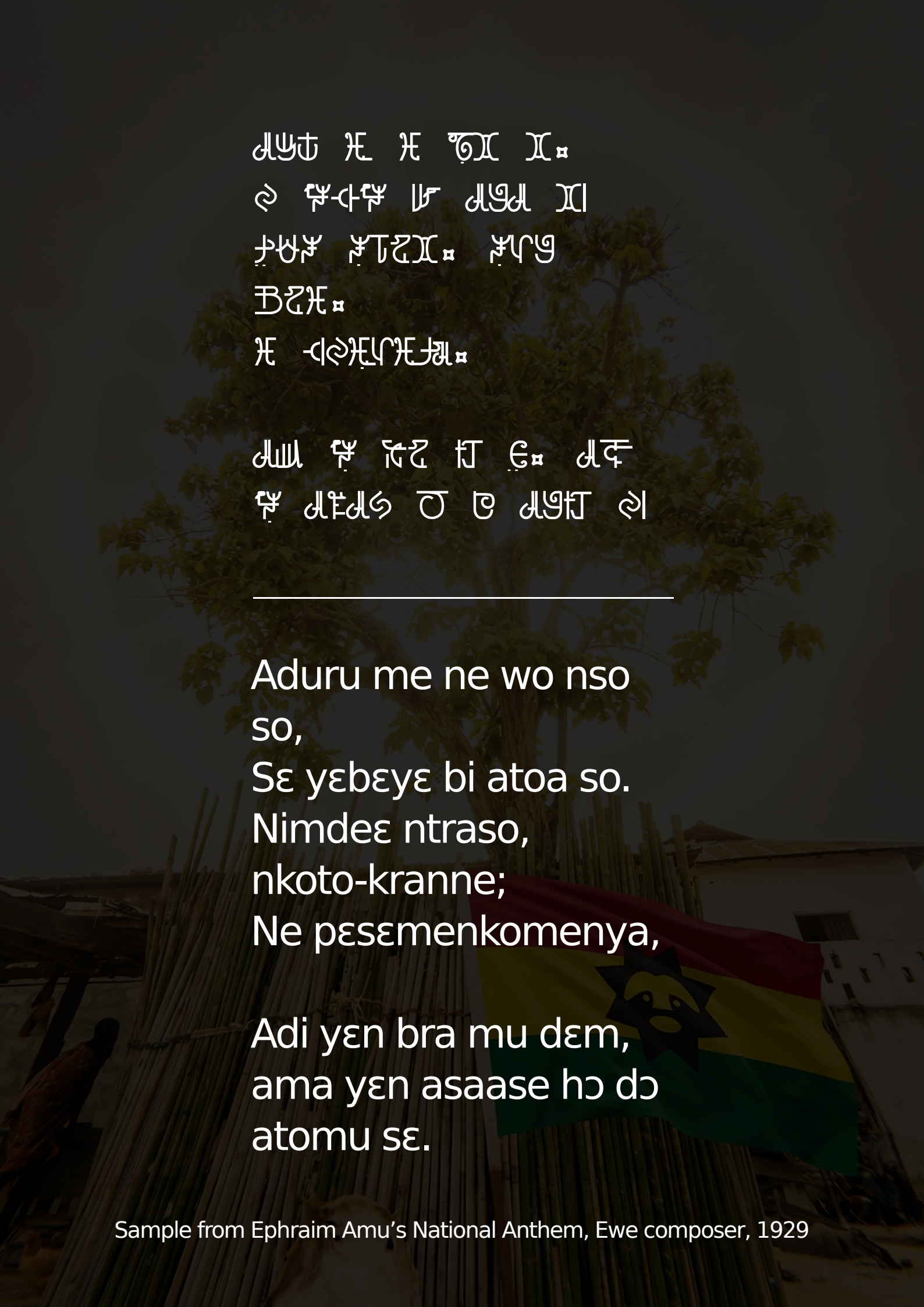
- *NY*
- *M*
- *MY*

S—, HY—, Z— (Sibilant Group)

The S radical produces the voiceless alveolar fricative syllables sa, se, sɛ, si, so, sɔ, su.

- *HY —*
- *Z —*





Aduru me ne wo nso so,
Sɛ yɛbɛyɛ bi atoa so.
Nimdeɛ ntraso,
nkoto-kranne;
Ne pɛsɛmenkomenya,

Adi yɛn bra mu dɛm,
ama yɛn asaase hɔ dɔ
atomu sɛ.

Sample from Ephraim Amu’s National Anthem, Ewe composer, 1929

Learn to write your kradin

As part of the **Neo-akan movement**, to decolonise and adapt to modernity without forsaking our identities.